

January 2021 | ISSUE NO. 4 | Ring In The New

The Writers Block

“Look for the sky-
diver...that’s gonna
be you someday...”

- Mr. Sylvester

Featuring

What We Want Back from 2019

Ways to Improve Mental Health
During Lockdown

Tips to Increase Productivity in
Semester Two

Summarizing 2020 in
Spaceflight

The Writer’s Block | Issue #4

Editor's Note: The Thing About Typewriters



My friend recently bought a typewriter. Typewriters both terrify and astound me; I marvel at those who can master and tame the device... but stay far away. I believe that writing on a typewriter is different type of writing entirely, a different skill.

What scares me about typewriters is their permanence. With no erasing, every word that is typed remains on the page. No take backs. If you want to fix a letter, you must brave the whiteout or scrap the entire page; typewritten words work as a team, refusing to leave any soldier behind. Frighteningly, I have already used my backspace key over a dozen times in this paragraph. My writing is adjustable, fearless. I test words, swapping them around like pieces of a puzzle. I'll take a step back, adjust, and then cut the whole sentence. The typewriter is not so lenient. Every thought is a risk, and every twitch must be carefully evaluated. Saddled with a typewriter, I would live a stressful life.

Still, the typewriter is a wondrous beast. The click of the keys punctuated with the longer clack of a line change... and the smell of fresh ink. It's the stuff of dreams, and (see earlier paragraph) nightmares. You can get a lot written with no distractions, and the typewriter literally carries only a blank page. Perhaps this machine is an ode to living on the edge; allowing your purest ideas, with little intervention, to appear on the page. It seems sincere and genuine, to cede your immediate thoughts reign over your audience. All those monkeys on typewriters are brave and honest, if nothing else.

Our modern equivalent to the typewriter may be shorthand, where pen to page is, for the most part, permanent. Legible shorthand is slow – in my own scrawl at least – but still faster than a typewriter. I'd encourage you to do a bit of freehand writing. Dare to take a risk: put pen to paper and leave the eraser in your pencil case. Perhaps your immediate thoughts shine true. And in the meantime, if you find yourself in front of a typewriter, give it a go. I promise I'll do the same.

Gratitude goes out to our lovely graphics, writing, and editing teams, Arman M., Nicholas V., and Tejah B. for their contributions to Constantine's article, and, of course, Mr. Sylvester and Ms. Della Mora. There is a rocking line up of articles here to kick off the New Year; thank you for being such dedicated readers.

Hugs,

Emiko Wijesundera

Editor-In-Chief

Want to contribute to *The Writer's Block*? Write a *Letter to the Editor*, addressed to ewijeysundera@bayviewglen.ca, to be included!

What We Want Back from 2019 with Zara



Things We Took For Granted

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Ways to Improve Mental Health During Lockdown with Julia



Mental Health During Lockdown

[Read More](#)

Tips to Increase Productivity in Semester Two with Delnaz



Ways To Be Productive

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How Students Approach Exams as Exams Approach Students with Constantine

In this Issue

What We Want Back from 2019 with Zara

Ways to Improve Mental Health During Lockdown with Julia

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The Worrisome Future of our Generation's Social Skills with Christian

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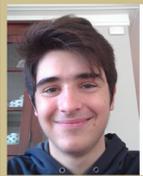
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Student Leaders, Unmasked

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Between the Lines: January 2021



Anavi has been writing since she was a child and uses it as an outlet to de-stress. She hopes her last year will go out with a bang.

Happy New Year everyone! I hope you all had a great break and got some time to write. Now that exams are over, and the next semester has started, I've been feeling a lot like it's another year entirely. With new classes and our return to what may very well be a permanently online school system, there's a lot going on.

In this spirit, **write something no longer than a page about a time of change in a character's life, where they managed to stay grounded. It can be**

in any form that you want. The reason of change does not have to be realistic; be bold.

And a huge thank you to Christian Hayward for his compelling short story *Sunburn* in response to the November prompt. You can find this below, along with the prompt.

If you have ideas for prompts, questions about submissions or anything else, feel free to reach out to me, Anavi Parekh, through Teams or email at aparekh@bayviewglen.ca.

The November prompt:

Finish the story- A girl walks into a convenience store and sees a man collapse. Try to experiment with different perspectives. One page maximum.

Sunburn - Written by Christian Hayward

Sweltering summer heat flows through the streets, molding to our faces. The sun is angry, attempting to push us down so much that we crawl. UV rays almost seem to be trapped in this cage of a city alongside us, as if baking in an oven. As a younger man, I was exposed to the sun many times, in fact, I could handle any weather. Back then, I was expected to, as long as I got the job done. The key thing to understand about the sun is that it does not matter how many people complain that it is too hot in Dubai, or that it is too cold in Yellowknife, the sun does its job regardless. That was me, years ago. But today, it is far too hot.

I am eighty-two, and I find myself walking over to our local convenience store alongside my granddaughter, my greatest love. She is twelve years old, smart, kind, my rock, my radiant reminder that optimism is important to glimpse into once in a while. She is this way for good reason, her parents did not associate with me for some time.

This is not a source of pride for me, not a place I should linger on for long, but I have hurt people. Violently. Savagely. I did it because it was my job, and like the sun, I did not ask any questions. I did it because it was my responsibility. Loan shark is too light of a term for the work I did. Much lighter than I would label it. Shame has been a recurring emotion of mine, and yes, over the years the severity of the emotion has weakened, but...look, I am okay. I like to think that I am a better man now than the one of my youth. My granddaughter does not know of my past, nor

should she. She just knows that I was a waiter for many years, which I was: a lie wrapped in a truth. It suffices.

--

My grandpa is Superman. Nothing can hurt him. He protects me and wants to see good in the world. See? Superman. He's perfect. I love him.

We need milk, eggs, and bread; that's what he told me to remind him of when we arrive. The sun is brutal today, like it doesn't care about us at all. But...there, there it is! Excitement fuels my body as soon as the store comes into my view. We enter.

It is a blessing, the cool air acting as a reward for lasting so long in the angry heat. Grandpa is relieved, and a smile comes onto his face.

"Alright, honey. Can you remind me what we need?" He asks me.

"Milk, eggs, and bread," I reply.

"Good girl,"

The milk is in the back, encased in a freezer. Still enjoying the sweet sensation of air conditioning, I make my way over. Lined up in a series of racks are all the different types of milks. Skim milk, one percent, two percent...I try to recall which type he asked me to get.

"Sir! Sir, are you alright?" I hear someone say from the other end of the store. In a startled manner, I spin around to see what happened. Grandpa is on the ground. Did he fall? Yes, yes I think he did. Grandpa, how could he fall? Nothing can hurt him. A muffled scream escapes my grandpa's lips as he breathes heavily.

--

So I was rushed to the hospital in a panic, which makes sense I suppose. It usually calls for some worry when an old man falls. My body was supported by a hospital bed while my daughter and son-in-law towered above me. The polarized expressions on my daughter's face quickly shifted from concern and distress, to relief and excitement. She wraps her arms around me with a comforting smile that feels luminescent. My granddaughter races into the room, her face too glowing. Everything is going to be alright.

Yes, it hurt, and I'm fine now, but I can't help but laugh at the situation; I used to break knees and now mine are giving out. Irony is a clever little devil, isn't it? In blatant honesty, I was less concerned about the fall itself, and more concerned about my granddaughter witnessing it. Seeing your idol fall in a convenience store due to his age, it is certainly not a pleasant thing to bear witness to. But she is a tough girl. In fact, although she was startled, she was not particularly phased by it, knowing that I would bounce back.

--

Closing her delicate little eyes, my greatest love begins to doze off in my arms while we sit silently on the couch.

"Grandpa," She began, "Were you scared? When you fell the other day?"

“Everyone gets scared, sweetheart. Maybe a little bit, but I knew I would be okay,”

No, that was not real fear; it was just discomfort. In that moment, I remembered what real fear is. I remembered the look of that forty-two-year-old man who was just trying to put food on the table, live in a safe and nurturing home, make his family content, and keep his kids from going down the same path he did. Unfortunately, I can still describe the terrified expression on that man’s face when I threw him out into his backyard on that cool suburban night, when his family watched him be beat to a bloody pulp by a man they did not even know...that was fear. Fear in its most raw form, seeping out from between his bruised lips. I was the sun all those years ago. But maybe now, maybe after all of this time, I have been enlightened, and now I can give the sun a new meaning: one that refers to warmth and love rather than responsibility. That is something that can satisfy my wishes.

I am soothed by the silence lying still in the room, the feeling of my granddaughter’s breath on my hand, fatigue beginning to take control of my body. I am a plant peacefully absorbing sunlight. My attention is guided towards the clock in the kitchen. Tick, tick, tick, tick. I am regretful for my past actions. Tick, tick. I was a different man. Tick, tick. No more excuses; I have little time to do good, so for my granddaughter, I will take full advantage.

Age 2 to University Entrance | Co-educational | Multicultural | Multi-Denominational | IG: @bayviewglen_toronto

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What We Want Back from 2019 with Zara



Things We Took For Granted

Zara is a Grade nine student who enjoys writing and playing sports.

Each year must come to an end and allow a new one to begin. When this happens, we all anticipate a year like the last, and hope for the world and its population to progress and evolve into a better version of itself. People made New Year's resolutions to set goals for themselves in the upcoming year. However, I can assure you nobody anticipated their New Year's resolution being to stop forgetting their masks in the car. 2020 in its entirety has been hectic and terrifying. There is so much we took for granted in 2019 that we wish we still had this year.

2020 was a year unlike any other, however although practically nothing was the same this year as many years prior to 2020, we were luckily still given few months of summer and warmth. We got great amounts of sunshine and tons of warm nights, but how we spent our days was quite unusual compared to a regular summer vacation. Amusement parks and public pools were closed temporarily for obvious reasons, so were many trails and parks. Many people resorted to renting cottages or going to their own, but the rest of us had a very different experience. Many tried to pick up new hobbies like baking or arts and crafts, while others did a larger variety of things like going

on a road trip with no destination or watching every movie on Netflix. Needless to say, we found ways of occupying ourselves, but without travel or access to places to hold day trips like Wonderland or the zoo, this summer was much harder to occupy ourselves in than any other year.

Before quarantine, simple gatherings with our friends were something we were able to do whenever we pleased. Even if we were busy with studying or had co-curriculars to attend, we would still have time to spend with them at school. Certainly, before 2020 had arrived, we had never imagined a time when we would be restricted and necessitated to stay inside our homes and wear a mask.

Another example of something we had taken for granted is our holidays. People generally make a big deal out of holidays every year. These special days are never taken for granted at any time of any year. Each family has their own tradition for birthdays, Halloween and the holiday season towards the end of the year. Seeing that there are restrictions placed on how many people we can have over at a certain time, and which of our most beloved restaurants are still available to eat at, we had limited options to help carry out our traditions this year.

Overall, this year has been a rollercoaster of emotions and both a terrifying and heartbreaking experience for all of us. Though, we still got a great lesson from going through the twists and turns of 2020: never take anything for granted. Whether it be access to an amusement park or going trick or treating with a mask only meant to look scary, rather than to keep us away from a disease, this year is coming to an end. I believe we can all agree that any moment of freedom we get in the new year, to spend with people we miss and carry on traditions we have yet to resume, will be cherished for a life time.

Newsletters Referencing this Item

- The Writer's Block | Issue #4 (02/03/2021)

Ways to Improve Mental Health During Lockdown with Julia



Mental Health During Lockdown

Julia Apitz-Grossman is in Grade 9 and has been at BVG for seven years. She has a variety of academic interests that range from learning languages to writing stories. In her free time, you can find her playing video games, listening to 70s music, and watching an unhealthy amount of 'Friends'.

Now that Ontario has entered yet another lockdown, you may be feeling trapped, bored, and like your negative emotions have been amplified. You are not alone. These times have been harder than ever, especially now that it's exam season. This also means that it's as important as ever to make sure that you are keeping your own health in mind just as much as your exams and grades, maybe even more. Here are some tips and suggestions of what to do in order to keep your mental wellbeing strong and healthy.

1. Try to limit the amount of news you watch. I know, it's tough to tear your eyes away from the TV, especially during this historic time in the United States. But it's really important not to cause yourself more stress than necessary in these times. The news is upsetting, and after worrying about homework or rushing to finish an assignment the whole afternoon, the last thing your body needs is to be even more stressed over a period of time that

should be relaxing. Instead, read the headlines to keep up to date but limit yourself so that you don't get stuck watching the news for hours, and leave yourself with an upset stomach. Put on your favourite show, kick back with some popcorn, and let yourself enjoy life a little.

2. Maintain a proper sleep schedule. I myself do not sleep close to enough, and I'm sure many of you find it hard to get to bed as well. For me at least, this is usually because I spend all my time after school doing work so once it's time for me to get ready to sleep, I feel like I need to have some downtime. The obvious solution here is to not do work all night, but that's harder than it seems when so much is due. It's worth it though, trust me. At a certain point, I would suggest calling it a night, as we need at least eight hours of sleep for our minds and bodies to properly function the next day. Schoolwork will become easier to understand, you'll be able to listen more in online classes, and overall, you will be in a better mood. Plus, it's nice to have some time in the morning to get dressed, freshen up, and have some breakfast before you have to log onto a call straight away (although I know it's tempting to reach for your computer at 8:29 and do class in bed). In order to be able to get a better sleep, here are some tips that are quite helpful.

- Keep your room cool, quiet, and dark. This combination is what your body needs most to have an effective rest each night.
- Try not to do any homework or exercise within an hour before you want to sleep. This way, your mind and body can wind down and relax so you fall asleep faster.
- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Routine is extremely important as it allows you to fall asleep and wake up much more easily, and feel properly rested in the morning.
- Try to exercise daily. It's hard right now during lockdown but going for walks or jogs is still allowed, plus you can easily pull up a workout video or hop on the treadmill for some activity. This way your body feels like it's done something when you lie down, and you don't feel restless at night.

3. Meditate. We've all heard of meditation, but how many of you have actually tried it outside of school or health class? Meditation is something that each and every person should take part in, even for just a few minutes a day. The health benefits are legitimate and extremely worthwhile. A study from Harvard Medical School revealed that after eight weeks of meditation, the brain showed an increased amount of gray matter in the learning,

memory, and emotional regulation sections. Gray matter processes information and sends signals to other parts of your body, among many other crucial tasks, which is why it is so important to maintain high levels of it. This could help maintain a healthy relationship between mental wellbeing and schoolwork alike. Just a few minutes of meditation each day can help relieve anxiety and depression, and reduce stress significantly, leading to an all-around better quality of life.

Overall, I hope that these few things help you even a little bit to enjoy each day more and be healthier both mentally and physically. It is completely natural to be struggling right now, but we still have each other, and can share tips to hopefully struggle a little less. We will get through this.

Newsletters Referencing this Item

- The Writer's Block | Issue #4 (02/03/2021)

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Tips to Increase Productivity in Semester Two with Delnaz



Ways To Be Productive

Delnaz Zamanian is a student in Grade 9. Delnaz loves to cook in her free time, you can also find her re-watching Brooklyn 99 for the third time!

This past year has been stressful; all we need is a fresh start to keep us motivated to reach our goals. In 2021, we have enough time to better our habits in order to get closer to our intention and be productive. Instead of procrastinating on an assignment that is due for two more weeks, doing your task early will give you enough time to accomplish your hobbies or finish other assignments.

Maybe you have habits that you want to change too! I know I do. I have been struggling to be organized and have experienced different ways to be organized in the New Years. Therefore, I am going to share new ways to be productive and organized in the new year and the second semester.

1. Always have a schedule.
 - o The key to being more organized is having a schedule to avoid procrastination. Make sure your schedule is realistic.

2. Make small goals for yourself!

- Making small goals that you can easily accomplish. This will give you more motivation and makes your day much better. Those small goals can be about your interests and you can include them in your schedule.

3. Review the lesson right after class.

- Reviewing the lesson you just learned after class will clarify the content.

4. Make mind maps/notes about each topic.

- The way mind maps for studying work is that you write the title of the topic and start writing everything you know on the paper. After you are done, check your sources to make sure the information that you had was correct, and feel free to add more information. Taking notes is good for studying too! The purpose of taking notes about each unit or topic is so that you can read them to prepare for exams.

5. Make due dates for yourself.

- You can make an imaginary due date for yourself. The due date has to be earlier than the actual due date so you can get it done sooner. The purpose of this is to have more space to do your other studies.

6. Have the right mindset!

- Have a positive mindset and be open to your own ideas!

7. Reward yourself!

- Once you have reached your goals or you have completed a task, feel free to reward yourself with something simple. Watch an episode of your favorite show; or go for a walk.

In conclusion, being productive will have a huge impact on you and your grades. It makes you to have this great feeling about yourself, filled with joy and confidence. Being organized might seem easy but it takes time and

effort. The best way to trick your mind into it is to not make it look optional. Eventually, being productive turns into a habit, without you realizing it.

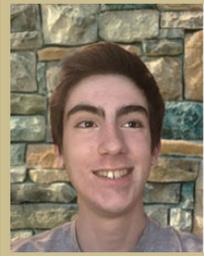
Newsletters Referencing this Item

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How Students Approach Exams as Exams Approach Students with Constantine



Exam Approaches

Constantine is a Grade 10 student, and an admirer of the written word. He can be found writing poems or spinning tales no matter the place or time.

Arman Momeni, Grade 9

Arman Momeni has never had the experience of studying for an exam, but that hasn't stopped him from feeling "more confident than he thinks he should." Don't be misled, he is a little stressed, but the cancellation of many assessments and the open-book aspect of his science exam do make things easier for him.

Out of the four courses he is taking right now (Science, Gym, French, and History), the only one with an exam is science. It's open book, which has definitely taken a lot of pressure off Arman, and he has a full week of study periods to prepare his electrical formulas and memorize his nutrient cycles. Arman has started managing a schedule for the first time to regulate his studying. In previous years, he would apply a more laissez-faire approach to

studying, sprinkling in sessions throughout his week and going wherever the momentum propelled him. But because of online learning, Arman realizes it's not enough to study in class. He finds that the periods aren't productive, and the border between studying in class and after class is blurred now that he is fully online.

He has been studying alone, as is his wont, and is feeling assured in his trajectory. He just needs to remember not to skip over any sidebar quote in the textbook, no matter how irrelevant it may seem. He learned that the hard way during his chemistry test.

Outside of science, the forecast is auspicious, with French having 3 ISPs (Independent Study Projects) and Phys. Ed., with no finals, acting as a fun diversion from the stress. Arman much prefers having to do projects than exams, and his predilection has been nearly objectively validated with all the extra work time that three-hour classes bring.

The transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9 is supposed to be a huge leap, as is much touted by the teachers in both years, but Arman has not found it to be such a huge difference. He is busy with his ISPs and is studying for his science exam, but he is not drowning in work like he thought he would. As anyone who's finished it can tell you, Grade 9 isn't so bad after all.

Nicholas Vettese, Grade 11

If Arman Momeni's study plan is a military regimen, then Nicholas Vettese's is a vacation guidebook. But that isn't to say that Nicholas is totally unprepared; his strategy has yielded him fantastic results in the past.

Traditionally, Nicholas leaves things to the last minute. For example, when he needs to prepare for a math exam, he compiles all his notes into one sheet a few days in advance, and then tries to memorize them all the night before. Despite the haste with which he does his work, it does pay off, with a stellar average and a status of one of best math students in the school.

Unfortunately, because of online learning and COVID, this year Nicholas's posthaste has worsened and dragged down his marks a few percent.

Procrastinating has been easier; stricter plans have unraveled without the class and teacher there to compel him.

Nicholas understands the weight of the situation, though, and has drawn up a rough study plan in hopes of motivating himself. But the question of whether he will stick to the agenda remains. That has been the main obstacle in the past. He can only hope.

In terms of the other breed of final assessment, ISPs, Nicholas feels they are more easily tamed. Culminating projects offer the advantage of being able to consult the teacher before submitting. Not so much with exams. Like his studying, Nicholas also starts his projects later than most, but he still gets “decent marks,” in his opinion. He admits that he could easily get everything done if he starts working now, but the urgency that burns in some people lies dormant in Nicholas. The important thing for him is that he is successful. There is not much incentive for Nicholas to change his ways, then.

The final assessment period is racing towards us like a runaway freight train, and although Nicholas is essentially tied to the tracks, he isn’t panicking like most would. He is “reasonably stressed,” but his strategy has proven worthy many times over. Now, all he needs to do is untie himself before the train arrives.

Tejah Babber, Grade 12

Tejah Babber has more than just exams on her plate; she has to deal with university admissions as well. Being in Grade 12, she is handed a full eight-course meal and dessert... and is expected to lick the plate clean. But that hasn’t stopped her from throwing herself full-force into her final exams—after all, these exams are the deciding factor for her average, which is the crux of her university admittance . They’re not just the cherry on top, as some like to say . Tejah has only two exams this year: one in Advanced Functions and one in AP Economics. Unfortunately, neither is open book. During her math exam, she will have to have her camera on for two hours, refrain from peeking at her notes, and keep muted any out-loud thoughts—because her microphone won’t be . What chafes her is the fact that she was originally supposed to have an open book exam, but her teachers changed it at the last minute. There weren’t enough open days for them to hold two separate exams, so whether the students like it or not, traditional is the way to go.

In terms of Economics, the AP exam will take place in May. Tejah will have to maintain her skills every day for months with no class before she takes the Advanced Placement examination. Talk about hard to swallow.

Aside from the AP exam, Tejah is not disliking this year's final assessment period. She much prefers the newfound weight placed on ISPs. She "doesn't test well," so this is an unexpected boon for her. Projects are much less stressful in the moment, and you can badger your teacher with questions and wring feedback out of them like a rag over the washbasin. Tejah has been reaching out to her teachers nearly every day and seeking help. She loves how easy it is now to get one-on-one help and personal feedback to improve her work. "The teachers know what they're looking for," Tejah says, "so [get] their advice."

This year is not as stressful as last year for Tejah, with less exams and conditional university acceptances piling up at her doorstep. She's taking her exams very seriously this year; she wants no regrets in the future. Her study of the study guide has proved useful, allowing her to take notes from the unit and ask teachers succinct questions. She's been managing her time more rigorously and dedicating more hours to study and review. Her one wish is that she had learned to regulate her schedule earlier. Time management would be her greatest piece of advice for younger students. She cannot overstate the importance of self-regulation and planning—they are the key ingredients to success.

This is Tejah Babber's last year at Bayview Glen; her last year at high school. Because of the switch to online schooling, Tejah's final year is not ending as she hoped it would. She has to take matters into her own hands and take extra care with her marks, because she wants to leave Bayview Glen in the best way possible: with no regrets.

Newsletters Referencing this Item

- The Writer's Block | Issue #4 (02/03/2021)

Summarizing 2020 in Spaceflight with Alan



This Year in Space

Alan likes argui-sorry, debating. He also enjoys science and public speaking, that's pretty much it.

2020 in Spaceflight

As we enter the new year, it might feel like 2020 all over again. But 2021 is certainly different; there were a TON of new developments and discoveries made last year, from moon landings to explosions. Welcome, beloved readers, to 2020 in space.

First off: space exploration. As far as exploring the solar system goes, no year in history quite matches up with the progress made this year (except maybe the Apollo era). We had three launches to Mars. THREE! The first was the launch of China's Tianwen-1 mission, which includes an orbiter, lander, and rover. Coming in second, the United Arab Emirates launched their first mission "Hope" to Mars. Lastly, NASA also launched their Perseverance rover to Mars, an advanced version of the Curiosity rover. China, being one of the emerging superstars of space, also launched the Chang'e 5 mission, which was the first mission to return lunar samples since

Luna 24 in 1976. JAXA's (Japanese Exploration Agency) Hayabusa 2 also returned samples of Asteroid Ryugu to Earth, and on top of that, NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission captured a surface sample from Bennu for return.

Human achievements in space in 2020 were few, but massive, nonetheless. (One small step...) In the USA, private company SpaceX (under contract by NASA) made the first crewed launch from the USA since the retirement of the Space Shuttle nine years ago using their new vehicle, the Dragon 2, which also became the first private vehicle to dock with the ISS, having previously birthed with the help of Canadarm. Additionally, NASA astronaut Christina Koch set a woman's record of 328 days in space, taking 5th place in most time spent in space in a single mission.

2020 Rocket innovation was explosive (literally). We saw the entire line of Starship prototypes (SpaceX's prototype Mars Rocket), from SN1 to SN8 fly this year. Notable among which were SN4, SN5, and SN8. SN4 culminated in a full-on explosion, as opposed to the rather underwhelming collapse of SN3. SN5 was the first to make a 150m hop, performing a static fire and a 150m vertical hop (plus some lateral movement). And, as many might know, SN8 performed an impressive 12.5km hop, performing the now iconic bellyflop maneuver, but unfortunately a combination of under pressure and overpressure led to the failure of one engine and the destruction of another, leading to a big boom.

And that's about it, that was 2020 in space. An honorable mention goes to the Arecibo observatory, which tragically fell after its suspended mount collapsed (a little bit more 2020 bad news). Some final notes I thought would be interesting:, 2020 has seen 114 launches, with 104 successes (91% success rate), and China takes the cake with the most launches from their country, inching ahead the USA by just 1 launch (39 to 38) . Anyways, with so much more innovation and opportunity in 2021, we can look forward to shooting for the stars.

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- The Writer's Block | Issue #4 (02/03/2021)

The Worrisome Future of our Generation's Social Skills with Christian



The Shifting Sands of Socialization

Christian is a Grade 12 student who is looking to have a great final year! He adores writing, specifically creative writing.

The Shifting Sands of Socialization

A screen is the border that separates two worlds. In one world, physical objects exist, we can feel the temperature on our skin, and reality is easy to find. In the other world, we live extensions of our lives, aspects that we cannot feel scraping at our fingertips. However, this other world is also one of real actions and real consequences. This is the online world, and in all honesty, it can be painful. Sometimes, it can lure us in with its devilish spell, grab us firmly by the neck, and choke us until we faint. The online world can be a stressful one, and it is heavily integrated into our lives.

Socialization has shifted to an online environment, a migration accelerated by the pandemic. Online socialization comes with many rewards and many burdens. One reward is the ability to connect with our friends, family, and loved ones during lockdown, an abnormal and difficult time. But our reliance on online communication is causing our social skills to shift entirely. I am

beginning to worry that our generation faces a future in which we will not be able to socialize the way that we did before COVID-19, and that the most important and special connections we have will be over an internet connection.

The online world is a world of permanence. Anything posted or sent through a message can be dug up, which makes it even more important to think ahead before expressing an opinion or thought. Face-to-face interactions do not have such consequences, but in an online experience, anything posted or sent automatically becomes part of that person's brand. Due to this, true authenticity in online interactions is rare. Our generation was born with the internet. We have been building up our online brands ever since we sent our first text message, and now, as we become more independent individuals, those brands are as important as ever.

An aspect of online communication that is leaking into general socialization is the ability to hide behind a keyboard. One can be selective about who they talk express themselves to. This ability to hide in the background when having conversations with others weakens the face-to-face social skills that are so important in a functioning society. However, I understand that the pandemic has made hiding behind a keyboard a more and more common behavior than ever, as there are not many alternatives. But when herd immunity is eventually reached and life begins to revert back to what we knew it as, socialization among our generation will mostly take place online.

Emotional intelligence, or EQ, is the ability to understand someone's emotions and find a way to help, relate to, and soothe them. It is the ability to read a room and understand what is socially acceptable and unacceptable. Several people have high emotional intelligence quotients, but there are others who must work on that skill. But as more and more socialization occurs online, how is the rate of EQ supposed to increase? How are people supposed to read facial expressions, or recognize certain voice tones? These are all essential parts of human communication, and the online world is tearing us apart from it. Emotional intelligence is such a wonderful skill to have, and from what I see in the world around me, most people embrace it. But the more we shift our socialization to keyboards, usernames, and video calls, the less we will be able to be empathetic.

These are the concerns that I have regarding socialization. Although the two worlds, the physical world and the online world co-exist, we must ensure that

the physical one is favored in the end, or we may lose the very attributes that make us human.

Newsletters Referencing this Item

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Bayview Glen Independent School 275 Duncan Mill Road Toronto, Ontario M3B
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SEC Profile: Head of Events and Secretary



Student Leaders, Unmasked

Anavi has been writing since she was a child and uses it as an outlet to de-stress. She hopes her last year will go out with a bang.



Danai Govas
How long have you been at BVG? 16 years



Ellie Twohey
How long have you been at BVG? 4 years

In these uncertain times, the need for dedicated leadership is imperative and we are incredibly lucky to have many student leaders here at Bayview Glen. Over the course of this year, I will be interviewing our student council and ask them questions about themselves. A one-minute speech is hardly enough to encompass all their marvelous personalities and intriguing tidbits, but regardless, I will try to do them justice.

1. What's your secret talent?

Danai: I know all the lyrics to every single Avicii song. He's my favourite artist of all time.

Ellie: I can sing, but I don't do it much at school. It's been a hobby for quite some time now.

2. What's your favourite place in school? Why?

Danai: The Grade 12 Common Area is special to me only for the Grade 12s and everyone in our grade is welcome there. I also think the significance of it is quite meaningful; all the Grade 12 graduates ever have shared good

moments there together. Of course, there have been changes this year, but the environment is still super welcoming.

Ellie: Definitely the theatre. I have a lot of good memories from camp and the play. Although we cannot do the play this year, it will always be very special to me.

3. What is your favourite aspect of Bayview Glen that still remains despite COVID-19? (and/or one you think other students should take advantage of, if possible, with restrictions)

Danai: The social events like coffee houses and Student Life events have been great. Now and before as well, they are small events where everyone in the upper school can come and share things about themselves and get to know other students better.

Ellie: It's impressive that the SEC and the clubs are all still running. It's a testament to how much people care about the activities in school and that they've found ways to stay connected and do things online. Having the SEC running is helpful especially during the pandemic, when everything seems to be falling apart, it's nice to have something consistent and concrete to look forward to. I think students should get involved BVG.tv and Media Club. When the pandemic first started, these two things still went on because of the nature of the activity. There are so many ways for people to help; from scriptwriting, to hosting, to filming, so everyone can participate no matter what their talents are.

4. What is your favourite word? Favourite faculty member?

Danai: My favourite word is "love". It can be used in so many situations and for everyone. I admire its versatility and the power this emotion has. My favourite faculty members are tied between Ms. Carpenter and Ms. Deeks, they are both such amazing teachers. Their teaching styles and the ease with which we can be with them makes learning more engaging.

Ellie: I really like the word "beauty". It's a very pretty word and more importantly it has a very powerful meaning behind it, especially now in the pandemic, when appreciating the smaller and beautiful things in life is imperative. And favourite faculty member, I don't want anyone to feel bad, but it's Mr. Osborne. We go way back; I've had him for three years and he's in a lot of happy memories.

5. What is one thing you would like the student body to know about you?

Danai: I am a huge movie nerd; I have seen the Marvel and Harry Potter movies more times than I can remember.

Ellie: I am a compassionate and empathetic person. I will never judge you, so if you need to talk or just vent, it will always be a very open conversation.

6. What is one thing you want to do as Head of Events/Secretary?

Danai: I want to graduate knowing that I have created or helped create an event that was enjoyed by the student body or affected them in a positive way. I hope to continue movie nights; I think the first one was popular and gives people a way to unwind. I'm trying to work around the COVID-19 restrictions and adapt the ideas I had before the pandemic to our current situation.

Ellie: I know assembly right now is quick, but now that it's looking like we might be online for a while, it might be fun to try something more engaging and interactive, like a Kahoot. We also could change the type of announcements in assembly, and instead get students to display work they're proud of or other things they'd like to share, so there's still a feeling of community where everybody knows what other students are up to.

7. With the intention of finding a silver lining: in what way has COVID-19 affected your life in a positive manner?

Danai: I've become a more stable version of myself, both physically and mentally. This time has allowed me to reflect and focus on myself which I never got an opportunity to do earlier. I still, of course, have stages where the situation gets me down, but I always recover.

Ellie: Being isolated has really made me think about myself and the kind of person I want to be in the future. I have a lot of regret because before the pandemic I turned down a lot of experiences and outings with friends, because I was busy at home studying or watching Netflix. And now I see that I've missed out on so much and there's nothing I can do about it. Things can just disappear in a snap, and this has given me a chance to realize that. I've learned a lot about how I should live and the people I want to surround myself with.

8. What is your favourite story/memory at Bayview Glen (preferably different than the one in the yearbook)?

Danai: In Grade 10 Haliburton, I fell in love with a stuffed husky at the wolf centre, but I didn't have any money on me. Mr. Church, who was my group leader, saw how devastated I was and bought the husky for me. Just seeing how willing a teacher was to help me out made me feel so happy and I still remember that moment now, two years later.

Ellie: My favourite memory is probably the entire production last year. I had so much fun playing my character, Mrs. Erlynne and the experience really boosted my confidence. I felt like a very poised, British lady which was nice because I'm the complete opposite. This was more special because we were one of the few schools where the play wasn't cancelled since ours is earlier and seeing how much the production this year has changed, last year is more precious.

9. What are your famous last words?

Danai: Everything in life happens for a reason.

Ellie: Carpe diem.

10. If you could do anything for one day in a world without COVID-19, what would you do?

Danai: I would love to watch the sunset in Santorini, Greece.

Ellie: Probably just travel to Europe, or Japan, or somewhere else. There's so much to see so I'd probably just rent a private jet, put it on super speed mode and just do everything, and experience things as they should be experienced, without masks.

Writer's Thoughts

This was my first interview in which the interviewees were not co-heads, which was a nice change of pace because there were many varied answers this time around. I loved speaking with both Danai and Ellie; they both left me with some excellent ways to make the best of our situation by learning from it. I learned so much about the two of them that it got me thinking about how little we interact with people we see every day. I had no idea Danai was a fan of Marvel and it turned out that Ellie and I had done an English project on the exact same topic! With so much change happening around us, I encourage you all to find people around you who you don't usually interact with and have a conversation with them. Even virtually, there's a lot to connect on and a lot to learn.

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